

Wickhambrook Neighbourhood Development Plan

Examiner's Clarification Note

This Note sets out my initial comments on the submitted Plan. It also sets out areas where it would be helpful to have some further clarification. For the avoidance of any doubt, matters of clarification are entirely normal at this early stage of the examination process.

Initial Comments

The Plan provides a clear and concise vision for the neighbourhood area. It is underpinned by a series of background documents which directly inform some of the policies. This is best practice.

The presentation of the Plan is excellent. The difference between the policies and the supporting text is very clear. In addition, the Plan makes good use of various high-quality maps and photographs.

Points for Clarification

I have read the submitted documents and the representations made to the Plan. I have also visited the neighbourhood area. I am now able to raise issues for clarification with both the Parish Council and with West Suffolk Council.

The comments made on the points in this Note will be used to assist in the preparation of the examination report and in recommending any modifications that may be necessary to the Plan to ensure that it meets the basic conditions. I set out specific policy clarification points below in the order in which they appear in the submitted Plan:

Policy WHB1

As its title suggests this policy establishes a clear spatial strategy for the neighbourhood area.

Policy WHB2

I looked carefully at the proposed site allocation during the visit.

West Suffolk Council comments about the overlap between the policy and Policy AP53 in the (well-advanced) emerging Local Plan. Does the Parish Council have any comments on the two options suggested by West Suffolk Council?

For my information, has the Concept Drawing (Figure 6) in the submitted Plan been prepared to add value and detail to Policy AP53 of the emerging Local Plan?

I note that the policy comments that the preferred method of delivery for the affordable housing is through a Community Land Trust. I agree that such an approach would assist in promoting the community's ambitions. Nevertheless, should this comment be in the supporting text rather than the policy as it is a preference rather than a requirement?

Policy WHB4

This is a good policy which has been designed to be applied in a proportionate way.

Policy WHB7

This is another good policy which celebrates the landscape character of the neighbourhood area.

Policy WHB9

This is an excellent policy which is underpinned by the Local Green Spaces Appraisal.

Policy WHB11

This is an important policy in the Plan. It is underpinned by the Design Guidance and Codes and the Development Design Checklist. In addition, the criteria in the policy are locally distinctive. In the round the approach taken is a first-class response to Section 12 of the NPPF.

Policy WHB15

I looked at the identified community facilities carefully during the visit.

This is an excellent policy which highlights the importance of community facilities in the neighbourhood area. The approach taken also acknowledges that the use and/or viability of the identified facilities may change in the Plan period.

Community Aspirations

The Aspirations are very distinctive to the neighbourhood area. This is best practice.

Representations

Does the Parish Council wish to comment on any of the representations made to the Plan? I would find it helpful if the Parish Council commented on the representations from the Claydon Family.

West Suffolk Council suggests a series of refinements to the Plan. The Parish Council's comments on these suggestions would be helpful. I would also appreciate the Parish Council's comments on the parts of West Suffolk Council's representation which comment about the overlaps between Policies WHB 5-6,10,13 and 16 and equivalent policies in the emerging Local Plan.

Protocol for responses

I would be grateful for responses and the information requested by 30 June 2025. Please let me know if this timetable may be challenging to achieve. It is intended to maintain the momentum of the examination.

If certain responses are available before others, I would be happy to receive the information on a piecemeal basis. Irrespective of how the information is assembled, please could it come to me directly from West Suffolk Council. In addition, please can all responses make direct reference to the policy concerned.

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Independent Examiner

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9 June 2025